

The Ballarat Naturalist

November 2013



Brisbane Range Excursion - Oct 6

Led & reported on by John Gregurke

First stop was near Mt Wallace to see a Brolga sitting on a nest built amongst spike rush growing in a farm dam. (Photo: p 2)

We entered the Brisbane Ranges National Park and went to Boar Gully camping area. On a walk around the dam we found several eucalypts: Manna Gum *Eucalyptus viminalis*, Brown Stringybark *E. baxteri*, Swamp Gum *E. ovata*, Scentbark *E. aromaphloia* and Narrow-leaved Peppermint *E. radiata*. Several Peas were also noted: Common flat pea *Platylobium obtusangulum*, Purple Coral-pea *Hardenbergia violacea*, Bushy Parrot-pea *Dillwynia ramosissima*, Golden Bush-pea *Pultenea gunnii ssp. tuberculata*.

Pobblebonks and other frogs were calling.



Photo: Field nats lunching at Sapling Gully picnic area



While having a cuppa we observed where cockatoos had chewed bark from around hollows and at the base of Manna Gum. A Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike perched briefly on a dead branch at the top of the tree.

Photo: Brogla on nest

A most interesting sight was the activity of an Olive-backed Oriole building its nest in a low, spreading peppermint. The nest was built largely of string bark. A Buff-rumped Thornbill looked closely at the nest when the oriole was absent. Was it looking for nesting material for its own nest?

Next stop was at the boundary between an area burnt within the past year and another burnt about 5 years ago. The long burnt area was dominated by an understorey of Rough Wattle *Acacia aspera* while in the recently burnt area the trunks of Austral Grass-tree *Xanthorrhoea australis* were prominent. Adjacent to the car park we found a Wallflower Orchid *Diuris orientis*, distinguished by the gradual change in colour from brown to yellow on its flowers. Nearby was a Leopard Orchid *Diuris pardina* with distinct patches of brown and yellow.

Travelling along the gravel road towards Bacchus Marsh we stopped when a purple flowering plant was spotted. It was found to be Dense Mint-bush *Prostanthera decussata* with asymmetrical purple flowers, and was the only mint-bush we saw during the day. This patch had a variety of other interesting flowers. Orchids seen: Musky Caladenia *Caladenia gracilis*, Pink Fingers *Caladenia carnea* var. *carnea*, Waxlip orchid *Glossodia major* and Rabbit-ears *Thelymitra antennifera* which needed sunshine to open its flowers. An aptly named plant seen was Spiny Bossiaea *Bossiaea obcordata*; a rigid plant with twiggy branches ending in a spine.



At the north end of Aeroplane Road the bush floor was white with Heath

Photo: Spiny Bossiaea *Bossiaea obcordata*

Photo: Dense Mint-bush
Prostanthera decussata.



Daisy-bush *Olearia minor*, a spreading shrub up to 1m high. Also here was Rosy Heath Myrtle *Euryomyrtus ramosissima* (previously *Baeckea*) and Hop Goodenia *Goodenia ovata*. The word *Ramosissima* is from Latin, *ramosus* - branched, and suffix *issimus* - most, referring to the much-branched habit of the plant.

During the day we also saw Bushy Parrot-pea *Dillwynia ramosissima*.

Lunch stop was at Sapling Gully picnic area surrounded by Red Box *Eucalyptus polyanthemos ssp. vestita*. On a short walk along the creek we saw a male Mistletoe Bird, Scarlet Robin and White-throated Treecreeper. In the damper environment along the creek we saw Fireweed Groundsel *Senecio linearifolius*, Sweet bursaria *Bursaria spinosa*, Ivy-leaved Violet *Viola hederacea*, Kidneyweed *Dichondra repens*, Australian Buttercup *Ranunculus lappaceus* and Common Maidenhair *Adiantum aethiopicum*.

Heading south, Aeroplane Road climbed up onto a dry, stony ridge with smaller trees. The understorey was still interesting with a variety of plants. Patches of the endemic Brisbane Ranges *Grevillea* *Grevillea steiglitziana* with green and red flowers were seen. Broad-leaved Peppermint *Eucalyptus dives* had balls of white flowers.

Last stop was on reaching Thompsons Road. This was an appropriate spot because Trailing Goodenia *Goodenia lanata*, the Club emblem was growing on the roadside. Here we were still able to see new-plants in flower - Heath Teatree *Leptospermum myrsinoides*. After we enjoyed a cuppa and said our farewells, we headed for home.

AUSTRALIAN NATURALISTS' NETWORK

The Lea, Hobart 17th October — 27th October 2014

<http://tasfieldnats.weebly.com/australian-naturalists-network.html>

For further information contact any FNCB committee members

Birds on my Travels

Presentation by Ken Hammond - club member

Following Ken's interesting presentation to the Bird Observer's Club he was asked to be our sole presenter for the club members' night. He graciously accepted the challenge. Ken's thorough preparation was obvious at our meeting.



Photo: Pied Butcher Bird

The following is Ken's list Photos of places and birds from his presentation. The birds listed are some of the species to be found in that state. To add interest to the show he added landscape and other features of the areas he had visited.

South Australia Views - Pennington Bay, Remarkable Rocks, King Island/ Kanyaka Station, Alligator Gorge, Flinders Ranges and Bool Lagoon. Birds - Pacific Gull, White-winged Fairy Wren, Variegated Wren, Southern Scrub Robin, and Cape Barron Goose.

West Australia Views- Two Peoples Bay, Murchison River at Kalbari Nat Pk, Wild Flowers, Gantheume Point near Broome, and Lake Argyle.

Birds - Brahminy Kite, Twenty Eight Parrot, Western Rosella, Sacred Kingfisher and Black-necked Stork.

Northern Territory Views-Trephina Gorge, Chambers Pillar, Rainbow Valley, Sturt Desert Pea and Nourlangie Rock.

Birds - Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Red-backed Kingfisher, Wandering Whistle Duck, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Black Kite.

New South Wales Views- *Three Sisters* Blue Mountains, Wagonga Inlet Narooma, Beach scene at Eden, *The Pinnacles* Ben Boyd Nat Pk.

Birds-Splendid Wren, Azure Kingfisher, Eastern Rosella, Emerald Dove, Apostle Bird.

Photo: Black fronted Dotterell



Victoria Views- Lake Brambruk Wyperfield Nat Pk. Field Nats at Muckleford Forest and Enfield.

Birds - Mallee Fowl, Tawny Frogmouth, White-naped H/E, White-

Canadian Forest Photo Point Monitoring

John Gregurke

Plantations of Radiata pine and blue gums (300 hectares in total) in the southern part of Canadian Forest, have been cleared and the lease of these areas has been relinquished.

Friends of Canadian Forest (FCC) are building community interest and information about the history, ecology and recreational uses of the Canadian Forest. The aim is to retain the area as public land for a multi-use forest park.

At the request of FCC, FNCB members have begun photo point monitoring of the regeneration in the clearing plantation areas. Members involved in the project are John Petheram, Wayne McGuire, John and Elaine Gregurke. During October, 14 photo points have been established to record 4 native vegetation sites and 10 areas of regenerating plantation. This is a long-term project to monitor the changes that occur over many years.



Photo: Canadian natural vegetation, metre pole used in monitoring for estimating relevant heights in sequential photos

At each site the latitude and longitude is recorded, along with the direction of photograph. The point is marked with a short wooden peg so it can be found with a GPS in future years.

Anecdotal observations of the areas photographed during spring, showed limited regeneration following logging and cultivation of the plantation area during the 2013 summer-autumn period. In the southern areas woody weeds including broom and gorse are wide spread. Blackberry occurs along the drainage lines. Golden Bush-pea *Pultenaea gunnii*, Drooping Cassinia *Cassinia arcuata*, Shiny Cassinia *Cassinia longifolia*, Silver Wattle *Acacia dealbata*, Blackwood *Acacia melanoxylon*, and Trailing Goodenia *Goodenia lanata* were found at many points. Regeneration of eucalypts is occurring within 50 metres of existing remnants.

It will be interesting to watch growth over coming years and determine what extra management actions are necessary in forested area.

Creswick Excursion Sat Nov 2

9.30 am normal meeting place or 10am meet at dam on Barby's Rd east. Explore Barbys Rd and mowed wildflower verge nearby.

11.30 am: travel 2km to visit Jane Marriott's 20 acre Covenanted grassy forest. Lunch. Toilet available

1.00 pm travel via Kingston Werona Rd to Koroochiang Cemetery and then across scenic wildflower drive to Shepherds Flat.

3.30pm head home via Basalt Rd or Hepburn Springs and Daylesford.

Any enquiries phone Jane 0402 811 659

Excerpts from Club Meeting Minutes Oct 4 2013

Opening and Apologies. Attendance: : The Vice-President F Hanrahan welcomed 20 members and friends. Apologies: M Martin, S McLachlan, M Sorell, D Brooke, G Binns, N Netherway, Z Martin, V Hocking, D Menon, P Laird, M Thomas.

Correspondence. IN: Reply from Minister for Environment & Climate Change to G Osborne's letter re burning – Royal Commission recommendation 57.

Request from VNPA to support a letter to Vic govt re Vic Native Veg Reforms. (see letter) Congratulatory card to Marilyn Hewish on her award of ANHM.

Emails from: Charlton Landcare Group re Flora & Fauna Survey of Community Forest, Spring in the Bendigo Bush, Sowing the Seeds of Success Forum (Hamilton), Cardigan Windermere Landcare Group re A Walk back in Time (Springfest Weekend, 1st in Nov), Environment Victoria re the Fed Govt dismantling various environmental ministries and groups – sign petition.

OUT: Logo to VNPA as signature to Vic Native Veg Reforms letter.

Decline invitation from Charlton Landcare.

Reports

Treasurer's Report: Opening balance \$6091.68 Income \$109
Expenses \$44 Closing balance: \$6156.68

General Business

John Gregurke invited members to join him on a Photo-point walk for Canadian Forest on Wednesday at 9.30am. (Ed: See p 5-6)

Show & Tell/Reports.

Chris Baulch gave a graphic description of the results of eating Mycoprotein – a food made from heated, then fermented fungi, *Fuscaria graminarium* as used by Quorn products as a vegetarian food. A warning on the packet suggested a small percentage of people might be intolerant to this product, and Chris certainly was!

September: Wayne McGuire at Lake Burrumbeet had seen an echidna in this locality for the first time; Crimson Rosellas, Sacred Kingfisher, Gull-billed Tern, Sea Eagle.

27.09.13 John Gregurke noted a Brolga nest on a farm dam 1km east of Mt Wallace. (Ed: See p 1-2)

30.09.13 Les Hanrahan at Bungaree saw 6 Blue-winged Parrots.

3-4.10.13 Richard Emery & Lisa Hunter at Dereel saw Donkey Orchids.

4.10.13 Paul Norquay at Mt Egerton saw a White-throated Tree-creeper hopping along the bottom side of a horizontal branch.

27.09.13 Claire Dalman, travelling at Port Campbell, noted “for a night we had the care of a tiny baby wood-duck till we could get it to Parks Victoria”. At Marie Crescent, Wendouree, Wattlebirds as usual enjoying their annual feed of the NZ Kowhai tree.

15.09.13 John Petheram noted massed daffodils and jonquils around La Franchi hut, & on 26.10.13 at same place, bluebells in profusion.

CALENDAR 2013

November

- Fri 1 Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture*
**Sat 2 Creswick Barbys Lane - Jane Marriot, club member(p6)*
Tues 4 Mid(?) -month Excursion Enfield -Paul Norquay
Tues 22 Committee meeting at Les's

December

- Fri 6 The Temoq: Ultimate Field Nat of Malaysian Rainforest - Dr Peter Laird, Anthropologist & club member*
Sun 8 pm Buninyong area & tea - John Gregurke
-

Committee

President Peter Dalman
Vice –President..... Fran Hanrahan
Secretary Carol Hall
Treasurer Les Hanrahan

Elspeth Swan	John Mildren
Claire Dalman	Val Hocking
John Gregurke	

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Meetings are held at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr Gillies and Gregory Sts, on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm..

Excursions: Leave from the carpark at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr Gillies and Gregory Sts. at 9.30 am, unless otherwise advised.

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